(b) whether similar reports have been received from other States also during the past three months, if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what is the Government's response by way of checking this trend?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) A statement showing the number of complaints received from various states in the last three months is annexured. (*See* below).

(c) While the complaints regarding illicit felling of trees are being dealt through State Governments, following steps are taken by Government of India to check illicit felling of trees:

(i) The Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 was enacted to check the diversion of forest land for non-forestry purposes;

(ii) The State Governments have been asked to consider a ban on green felling of trees on hilly and mountainous regions above 1000 metres;

(iii) Guidelines have also been issued to the States to involve village communities in protection of forests on usufruct basis;

(iv) The G. B. Pant Himalayan institutes for Environment & Development is engaged in research and development studies.

(v) Export of timber has been banned.

(vi) Import of timber has been liberalised.

Statement

Rising Rate of Illegal Felling of Trees

Complaints regarding illicit felling of Trees in Last three Months—Statewise

Sl. No.	Name of the States	No. of complaint received
1.	Bihar	4
2.	Gujarat	1
3.	Haryana	1
4.	Madhya Pradesh	15
5.	Maharashtra	1
6.	Orissa	1
7.	Rajasthan	4
8.	Uttar Pradesh	16

Depletion of Forests

2746. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to constitute a task force to operate in different States for a limited period in extreme cases of environmental degradation with special reference to forests; and

(b) if so, whether Government would initiate such steps to retrieve lost forests and prevent further and total depletion of forest resources in different States?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) and (b) Ecological Task Forces have been set up for taking up eco-development and afforestation in difficult terrains. At present, three such Eco-Task Forces are operational in the States of Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Jammu & Kashmir. The constitution of further eco-task forces is being considered but will depend on resourced availability.

Protests from some Communities against their dislocation from Rajaji National Park

2747. SHRI TRILOKI NATH CHATURVEDI:
DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:
Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a whether it is a fact that the Gujjars and other communities having a base in Rajaji National Park in Uttar Predesh have been protesting against their dislocation from the forest; and

(b) what steps Government have taken to meet the demands of these communities?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) and (b) In order to protect the forest and wildlife in the Rajaji National Park and at the same time to improve the quality of life of Gujjars and to bring them into the main stream of social life

and also to prevent their exploitation by the milk vendors in urban areas, a Scheme of rehabilitation of Gujjars was formulated by the Government of Uttar Pradesh with the approval of the Gujjars themselves. Subsequently, a section of Gujjars protested against this rehabilitation and the matter was agitated before the Supreme Court of India also. However, the writ petition was dismissed.

In order to save the biodiversity of Rajaji National Park and to rehabilitate the Gujjars properly, an area of 80 ha. of Pathri forests has been earmarked. 512 houses with cattle sheds and feeding stalls have been built with amenities like school facilities, community hall etc. The Gujjars are being persuaded to move to the Pathri colony.

Ecological imbalance in Arunachal Pardesh

2748. SHRI KAMAL MORARKA : Will the MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are aware that the age old Jhum cultivation is threatening to create a disastrous ecological imbalance in Arunachal Pradesh;

(b) if so, whether any study has been conducted in this regard;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) what steps are proposed to be taken to restore the rich flora and fauna of the area ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH) : (a) to (c) Forest Survery of India has estimated, by the visual interpretation of Landsat imagery pertaining to the year 1984, that 8521 sq km of the forest area are affected by shifting cultivation in the state of Arunachal Pradesh. This constitutes about 10% of the total geographical area of the state. As in the case of other North-Eastern States, this traditional method of agriculture has adversely affected the regeneration status and productivity of the forest areas.

(d) State Government has been implementing various Jhum control programmes to wean away Jhumias from this practice and to settle them in permanent agriculture and other economically attractive activities. Under one such innovative scheme entitled 'Apna Van', the State Forest Department is providing limited subsidy to the farmers for tree planting activities on private/degraded Jhum lands.

Indian forest service officers serving in Bihar

2749. SHRI RAM RATAN RAM : Will the MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :

(a) the number of officers belonging to Indian Forest Service serving in Bihar State;

(b) the number of Scheduled Caste Officers therein;

(c) the number of officers sent to Foreign studies/Foreign assignments;

(d) the number of officers belonging to Scheduled Castes sent to Foreign Studies/ Foreign assignment; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH) : (a) 145;

(b) 19;

(c) 04 (1992-93);

(d) Nil;

(e) No eligible Scheduled Caste Officer was available in the State Cadre in the Zone of consideration for training/foreign assignment abroad.

Ganga Action Plan

2750. SHRI JAGMOHAN : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT & FORESTS be pleased to state :

(a) what were the main objectives/targets which the Ganga Action Plan launched in June, 1986 sought to achieve;

(b) whether those objectives/targets have been achieved; and

(c) if not, what are the reasons therefor and how the various bottlenecks and difficulties that have arisen vis-a-vis the State Governments and other implementation agencies are intended to be resolved ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH) : (a) to (c) The Ganga Action Plan (GAP) was launched in 1986 for abatement of pollution of the river Ganga, and to improve its water quality to bathing standards. To achieve the same, 261 schemes for interception and diversion of domestic sewage, sewage treatment, low cost sanitation,